

Hearers Not Doers

by Chuck Smith

The sermon emphasizes the importance of being a doer of the word, rather than just a hearer, and warns against the consequences of being a hearer only.

Duration: 29:05

Scripture: Jeremiah 42:5-6, Ezekiel 33:31, Micah 6:8, Matthew 7:24-27, Luke 6:46-49, Romans 2:17-24, James 1:22

Topics: "Obedience To God", "False Security"

Description

This sermon emphasizes the importance of not only hearing the Word of God but also actively doing what it says. It warns against the deception of merely agreeing with God's commands without obeying them, using examples from Matthew, Ezekiel, and Jeremiah to illustrate the consequences of not being doers of the Word. The message stresses the need for genuine obedience to God's instructions to withstand the storms of life and avoid a false sense of security.

Transcript

For our scripture reading today, let's turn to Matthew chapter 7 and beginning with verse 21. We'll read to the end of the chapter. I'll read the 21st and the outnumbered verses.

Pastor Brian will lead the congregation in reading the even-numbered verses, and shall we stand as we read the Word of God. Not everyone that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven. But he that doeth the will of my Father, which is in heaven.

Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name, and in thy name have cast out devils, and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then I will profess unto them, I never knew you, depart from me, ye that work iniquity. Therefore, whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock. And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house, and it fell not, for it was founded upon a rock.

And everyone that heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened to a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand. And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and it beat upon that house, and it fell, and great was the fall of it. And it came to pass, when Jesus had ended these sayings, the people were astonished at his doctrine.

For he taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes. Let's pray. Father, we ask that you would help us today as we deal with a very serious and difficult subject.

That subject of being a doer of the word, and not just a hearer. We realize, Lord, because of the emphasis that's placed on this throughout the entire scriptures, how important it is for us that we might not just be hearing the word, but may we put it into practice in our lives, and may we become doers of the word. In Jesus' name we pray, Amen.

You may be seated. Pastor Skip will continue to lead us through the scriptures this evening, as we are in Ezekiel chapters 30 through 33. So, we invite you to join with us at 7 o'clock tonight.

You can sleep in tomorrow, because it's a holiday. So, come on out and join with us as Pastor Skip leads us through the study of the word. This morning we'd like to draw your attention to chapter 33 and verse 31.

As the Lord declares to Ezekiel, They come unto you as the people come, and they sit before you as my people, and they hear your words, but they will not do them. For with their mouth they show much love, but their heart goeth after their covetousness. In the first part of this 33rd chapter of Ezekiel, he is commissioned by God to speak God's truth to the people, and to warn them against a false sense of security.

The Lord said, When the wicked continue in their sin, they will surely be destroyed. And those that were once living a righteous life, if they turn from that, and they begin to live a wicked life, their righteousness will not be counted, and they shall surely perish in their sin. But if they will turn from their wickedness, and do that which is right, they will live.

The people complained, well God isn't fair, and God responded, no, you're not fair. That God will judge the people by what they do. Just about this time, a runner came from Jerusalem to Babylon with the news that even as Ezekiel had prophesied, the city of Jerusalem had fallen to the Babylonian army.

And so when the people heard this news, they came to Ezekiel in order to hear what God might say to them at this critical time in their history. So Ezekiel spoke to them the word of the Lord. He told them of how that those that were in Jerusalem became presumptuous.

They said, well, Abraham was just one man, and the Lord gave the inheritance of the land to Abraham. We are many, so surely the land is ours, and we should inherit the land. However, what they didn't take into consideration is that Abraham was a righteous man.

He did what God wanted him to do. These people had turned from God. They weren't keeping the law of God.

Ezekiel tells us that they were worshiping idols, and there was violence in the city. They trusted in the sword rather than in the Lord. They committed abominations.

There was widespread immorality, and God said, should I let you possess the land? So the people have now come to Ezekiel, and they are sitting there before Ezekiel to hear the word of God. And as the Lord said, they come to thee as a people come. They sit before you as my people to hear your words, but they will not do them.

For with their mouth they show love, but in their heart it goes after covetousness. A desire to hear what God has to say, but yet not necessarily a desire to do what God says that they should do. One of the great problems of our day and of every age is that people so often want to hear the truth, but they do not necessarily want to follow the truth.

They hear the word, but they don't do the word. And that can become very deceptive. James wrote, be doers of the word and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves.

It's very deceptive, because there's some strange quirk in our minds that when I hear the truth, I hear the word of God, and I say, yes, that's right. I should do that. That is the right way to live.

And I agree with the commandments of the Scriptures. Somehow I feel because I agree that what God says is right is equivalent to doing what God says is right. So many people hear and do agree, but they don't do what God says that we were to do.

It was pretty much the attitude of the Jews in Paul's day. For he wrote in Romans chapter 2, Behold, you are called a Jew. You rest in the fact that you have the law.

You boast that you know God's law and His will, and you approve of the righteous living that is taught in the law. You are confident that you can guide those who are blind to the truth. You can lead them out of their darkness.

You feel that you're able to instruct those who are ignorant because you have the knowledge and the truth of the law. But in teaching others, do you not teach yourself? You teach that a man should not steal. Do you steal? You teach that a man should not commit adultery.

But do you commit adultery? You disdain graven images, but do you have idols in your heart? You boast that you have the law, but in your breaking the law you dishonor God. For the hearers of the law are not justified before God, but those that do the law shall be justified. So here they not only had the law, they were teaching the law.

They boasted in the fact that they knew the law. We can teach others how they ought to live according to the laws of God. But though they were teaching others, they themselves were not keeping the law.

They were teaching, thou shalt not steal, but they were stealing. They were teaching, thou shalt not commit adultery, but they were committing adultery. You should not worship idols, but they had idols in their hearts.

And so they were not doing what God said they should do. I hear what I should do. In my heart I say, yes, I need to do that.

But it doesn't go any further. Because I consent to what is right, I somehow feel that I'm all right. Because I know and I consent that this is good.

This is the way I should live. Jesus gave a parable of a father who had two sons. And he was talking to the Jews and he said to them, What do you think about this? A certain man had two sons.

He came to the first and he said, Son, go out and work in my vineyard today. And he answered and said, don't want to do it. But later he repented and he went out.

The second son said, Yes, sir, be glad to go. But he didn't go. Now, Jesus said, which one did the will of the father? And they said, well, the first son who actually went.

So true. It's not what I say. I might consent and say, oh, yes, right away.

But not do it. And what the Lord is looking at is what I am doing. Not what I am consenting is right.

But if I am doing that which is right. In reality, to know and to consent to the truth is not only deceptive, but it gives a false sense of security. James said, if you know to do good and you don't do it, it's sin.

Peter said, it's better that you never knew the way of righteousness than to know it and not do it. Jesus said in Luke 12, 48, For unto whom much is given, much is required. To whom men have committed much, of him they will seek the more.

So knowing the truth puts me under a greater condemnation if I do not do the truth. God speaks of these people that are going to come to Ezekiel. They will sit and they will listen to you.

But they're not going to do what you tell them they ought to be doing. Because I faithfully listen to the word of God and I say Amen in my heart. Somehow I feel that that is sufficient.

But Jesus covers that in the parable that we read this morning. He just begins by saying, Whosoever hears these sayings of mine and does them. Now, this is the end of the Sermon on the Mount.

This is the conclusion of the sermon. In the sermon Jesus gives to us a lot of commands of how God would have us to live. What God would have us to do in many circumstances and situations.

And what God would not have us to do. And so he lays out a whole manifesto for the Christian walk. He tells you that you're not to worry about tomorrow.

What you're going to eat, what you're going to drink, what you're going to wear. For the heathen worry about those kinds of things. But he said if you'll just seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness God will take care of all of these other things.

Jesus said don't judge. Because in whatever measure you judge another that will be the measure that is used in judging you. Jesus said that you are the light of the world.

But you've got to shine. Let your light so shine that when men see your good works they'll glorify your Father which is in heaven. And Jesus said love those that hate you.

Pray for those who spitefully use you. Now he says he that has my words and keeps them. Does them.

He said there are going to be a lot of people in that day they're going to come and say Lord, Lord. Did we not prophesy in your name and do all of these wonderful things? But he will say I never knew you. They had the word but they didn't do the word.

Jesus said that they are like a man who built a house and he dug deep, laid the foundation on a rock and when the storms came the house stood because it was built upon a rock. But he who hears my word and doesn't do them. He's like a man who built his house upon the sand.

Oh the storm came, the winds blew, the rain fell and the floods came and the house was born away by the floods. Great was the fall of it. There's that sense of security in the house.

I hear the word of God and I have that sense of security because I in my heart say yes, amen, that's true. But if I don't do it it's a false sense of security because when the storms come and believe me they will come. No life can escape the storms.

They will come. And if my house is built upon the sand it will crumble and as the flood is carrying it away that's no time to build the foundation. It's too late then.

So we see the teaching of Jesus on this subject of the person who only hears the word and doesn't do it. He does not practice it. He's destined to fall when the real storms of life come his way.

Many people do not wake up until the storm comes and it hits their lives and they begin to fall apart and then they realize that they weren't really prepared to face such things. Back in the book of Jeremiah we have again a classic example of people who heard the word but didn't do the word. When the Babylonians had destroyed the city of Jerusalem there was a small remnant of Jews that were still left in the land.

They were in a dilemma as to what to do. Some of them were wanting to go to Egypt and to try to find safety in Egypt. And so the people had gathered together and they were ready to move on down to migrate to Egypt to escape the Babylonian army and power.

They came to Jeremiah and they said to Jeremiah that they wanted him to tell them directions from God. We want to receive the word of the Lord. We beg that you will receive our request and that you will pray to the Lord for us what we should do.

Jeremiah said, alright I will do that. I will pray and seek the wisdom of God as to what we should do. So they said, May the Lord be a true and faithful witness between us.

If we do not do all of the things that the Lord tells us that we should do through you. Whether it is good or bad we will obey the word of the Lord. They made this solemn promise to Jeremiah.

Whatever it is, whether it's good or bad whatever the Lord tells you that we should do we will do it. So after ten days of prayer the Lord spoke to Jeremiah to give them instructions. So he called them together to give them the word of the Lord.

He said, the Lord says that if you will abide in this land the Lord will be with you. He will give you mercy in the eyes of the Babylonians and you will be spared. But if you go down to Egypt the Babylonians are going to conquer Egypt and you'll be slain in Egypt.

Therefore the Lord said don't go to Egypt. Tragically we read they said to Jeremiah you're lying to us. God didn't tell you to tell us not to go to Egypt.

You're just trying to deliver us into the hands of the Babylonians. And so we read they came to Egypt. Here they are promising oh tell us whatever God says we'll do it you know.

And he tells them and they say oh that's a lie God didn't tell you that. And they went to Egypt in spite of the fact that God said don't go. And the Babylonians conquered Egypt and they were slain in Egypt because they would not do what God told them to do.

It's so hard when you see people making a big mistake in life and you try to help them by telling them what the Bible has to say about the things that they are doing. But they ignore you. You tell them of the mess that they're going to make of their lives.

That if they continue in the path they have taken that it's going to only lead to disaster. And you watch them as they continue down that road until the disaster comes and then they call you again. And they say help what shall I do now? And this is happening you know they go on and and tell you all of the woe and the problems they have.

The mess that they've made of their lives. And I'm not nearly as patient as God. I usually say I have nothing to say to you.

I already said what I needed to say. You didn't listen. You did your own thing.

Exactly the opposite of what I told you you should do. Why should I waste my breath? Why should I try to tell you what to do now? You're going to do what you want to do. So just go ahead and do what you want to do.

Because you're going to anyhow. And don't waste my time or cause me to waste my breath. Oh God's much more gracious than I am.

Be thankful. But I've come to the conclusion that most people who come for counsel don't really want counsel. All they want is affirmation to do the things that they've already decided to do.

They're going to do it anyhow. And they just want you to affirm that what they're doing is right. And if you don't they'll go find another counselor who will.

The prophet Micah said He has shown you, oh man, what is good. God has shown you what you should do. The path that you should take.

The real issue is God has shown you but are you now going to do it? Will you affirm that the Lord is right? But continue doing your own thing? Or will you say, Lord you are right. Give me the power and grace now to do what you say I should do. Many of you today are facing issues in your life.

And you know what God wants you to do. He's been very clear about that in his word. But you find yourself fighting against the word of God.

Because it isn't really what you want to do. You don't want to forgive. You don't want to be tender hearted as the scriptures say that you should be.

You want to get even. And you find that you are devising schemes whereby you might get your pound of flesh. And you are fighting against God.

And when God says, be kind one to another, tender hearted, forgiving one another. Even as God for Christ's sake has forgiven you. You say, no, no, no.

That doesn't apply to me. Yes, that's true. I know that people should be kind, tender hearted and they should forgive and all.

But, and that is always in there it seems. The reason why I'm not going to do it. My justification to do my own thing rather than to do what God declares I should do.

He's shown you, oh man, what is good. Now, just to say, oh yes, that is good, that is right. You should do that.

That is the right thing to do in these kinds of circumstances. You should just say, oh forget it. Let's go on.

You know, I forgive and all. But you don't do it. You know you should, but you don't do it.

Then you see, you are living in that deception. You're a hearer of the word, but you're not a doer. You're living in that false sense of security.

Hearing the word of God, but not doing the word of God. And thus, when the storm comes, your house will be wiped away and you with it. Oh, God is speaking to your heart today.

Don't just set it aside. Be doers of the word and not hearers only. And when the storm comes, your house will stand because it's built upon the solid word of God.

Father, we thank you that you've given to us your word, your truth. And we want, Lord, that our hearts not only just consent to the truth. But that we might be doers.

Doers of the word. Not hearers only deceiving ourselves. And so, Lord, we pray that today you'll help us to make that resolve.

That by your help, through your strength, we will do those things that you have called us to do. And that we, Lord, might not be just hearers, but doers. In Jesus' name, amen.

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